

# Emergency Department Staff be alert for Measles!

## Measles

- is a highly infectious airborne illness that is often severe
- aerosols remain a risk to others for at least 30 minutes after the infectious person has left
- is infectious from 24 hours before onset of prodromal symptoms to 4 days after the appearance of the rash (if no clear date for onset of prodrome, then infectious from 4 days before rash onset)
- incubation period is usually 10 days to the onset of fever (range 7-18 days).



Face of boy with measles, third day of rash<sup>1</sup>

Maculopapular rash of measles<sup>2</sup>

Koplik spots on buccal mucosa<sup>3</sup>

## Symptoms and signs

### Prodrome

- 2-4 days with FEVER and malaise, **AND**
- one or more of:
  - cough
  - coryza
  - conjunctivitis
  - Koplik spots on buccal mucosa (transient and uncommonly observed).

### Rash

- fever is present at the time of rash onset
- commences on face / head then descends
- maculopapular becoming confluent
- onset 2-7 days after prodrome.

Patient usually looks and feels very unwell.

## If measles is suspected

### 1. Infection control

- immediately put a fluid resistant surgical mask on the patient: this should be worn during transport and until the patient is in an isolation room
- treat the patient in strict airborne isolation: single negative pressure room with the door shut
- only healthcare workers who are immune to measles (see box) should treat the patient
- leave the room vacant for at least 30 minutes after the patient has left.

### 2. Treatment

- assess and treat the patient, including any complications
- provide supportive treatment such as antipyretics and fluids, as required.

### 3. Laboratory tests (URGENT)

- **PREFERRED SPECIMEN:** throat swab or nose swab or nasopharyngeal swab or aspirate, for measles PCR, in viral transport medium
- urine for measles PCR
- serology for measles IgG and IgM.

### 4. Notification (URGENT)

- notify all patients with suspected or confirmed measles immediately to SA Health Communicable Disease Control Branch to enable prompt public health action: phone **1300 232 272, 24 hours/7 days.**

### Who is immune to measles?

People who are:

∇ immunocompetent **AND**

have at least one of:

∇ born before 1966 (most will have been exposed to measles in childhood)

∇ documented evidence of two measles containing vaccinations when both doses were given at  $\geq 12$  months of age and at least 4 weeks apart

∇ serological evidence of measles immunity

∇ documented laboratory definitive evidence of prior measles.

Further information including the management of measles contacts is available from [www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/InfectiousDiseaseControl](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/InfectiousDiseaseControl)

1 Image courtesy of Public Health Image Library (PHIL). Department of Health and Human Services. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC-USA).

2 Prof D Gordon, Flinders Medical Centre. Used with permission.

3 Prof D Gordon, Flinders Medical Centre. Used with permission.